

Life

St. Dominic Savio was born in a poor but devout family in Italy in 1842. In addition to being a pious person, he had guided people to the Lord since he was a child. Starting from the age of four, he did not need to be reminded to pray the morning and evening prayers and say grace before meals. When a relative did not pray before eating with his family, he reminded everyone to pray to God to bless the food, then made the sign of the cross and prayed aloud. His parish priest said since the age of five, he had piously served mass as an altar server, and if he arrived before the church opened, he would kneel on the steps outside to pray. Because of his spiritual maturity, Dominic was exceptionally approved to receive the Eucharist at the age of seven. Dominic was admired for his good character at school. Once, two mischievous students vandalized some school property and blame it on Dominic, who did not defend himself and was reprimanded by the teacher in public. Later, when the truth was out, he explained that he remained silent so as to imitate Christ who did not defend himself when he was falsely accused, and he wanted the two students to have a chance to repent. Everyone was moved. When he was a teenager, Dominic saw two classmates who were about to start a fight. Dominic stood between them holding a crucifix in his hands and succeeded in stopping the fight. Dominic is the patron saint for the wrongly accused and juvenile delinquents.

At twelve years old, Dominic met Don Bosco. When the priest saw that Dominic was full of the Lord's grace at his young age, he was very touched and was willing to take him to Turin. Dominic was happy to be under Don Bosco's mentorship at the Oratory and progressed in spiritual growth. Dominic has always loved the Virgin. In December 1854, Pope Pius IX declared the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The following year, Dominic led his classmates in establishing the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception. Dominic had always suffered poor health. In 1857, he returned home to get better. After a few days, he died after receiving the Anointing of the Sick and saying the prayers for a happy death. Most young saints are martyrs, but Dominic, who was not yet fifteen, was declared a saint because of his heroic virtues. He is a model for the youth, and the church designated him as one of the patron saints of altar servers.

Reflection

Saint Dominic definitely had the grace of God, and he also loved people, but he was still a mortal. Before the age of four, someone had to teach him how to pray, help him form pious habits, let him be an altar server, and told him about the Eucharist. All these enabled him to embark on the road of holiness. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that "parents are by word and example the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children... the home is the first school of Christian life and a school for human enrichment." (#1656-7) Parents and grandparents who love their children, besides caring for their physical needs and academic achievements, do they also remember to help cultivate their spiritual development? In addition to buying them superhero and princess merchandises, would they also introduce them to the saints of the Church? If a child is encouraged to grow in holiness from an early age, a good foundation will be laid in their faith to reduce the chance of them feeling lost in adolescence. In fact, there are many Catholic institutions' websites and free videos on the Internet which can be used as tools for adults to nurture their children.

Prayer

Dominic, who longed for sanctity and loved the Virgin, prayed enthusiastically; however, he did not just care about his own spirituality. Every Friday, he also took friends to the church to pray together. Once, he invited his classmate to recite Our Lady's Vespers in winter, and the classmate said no because it was too cold. Dominic lent him his own gloves and successfully encouraged his friend to pray with him in the church. On another similar occasion, he lent out his coat. Jesus has promised: "if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father". (Matt 18:19) We can learn from St. Dominic to invite others to pray with us and help them overcome obstacles when they are reluctant to accept our invitation.

May we learn from St. Dominic, not only to work hard to improve in our virtues,
but also help others to be closer to God.

We pray for the youth and altar servers in the parish.

St. Dominic Savio, pray for us.